# THE STORY OF A PRINTING HOUSE

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of
1671
The FALCON

Strahan (Wm) Bt Johnson's Buildings

Strahan v Sportswoode [Hunter-Leigh]

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# THE STORY OF A PRINTING HOUSE

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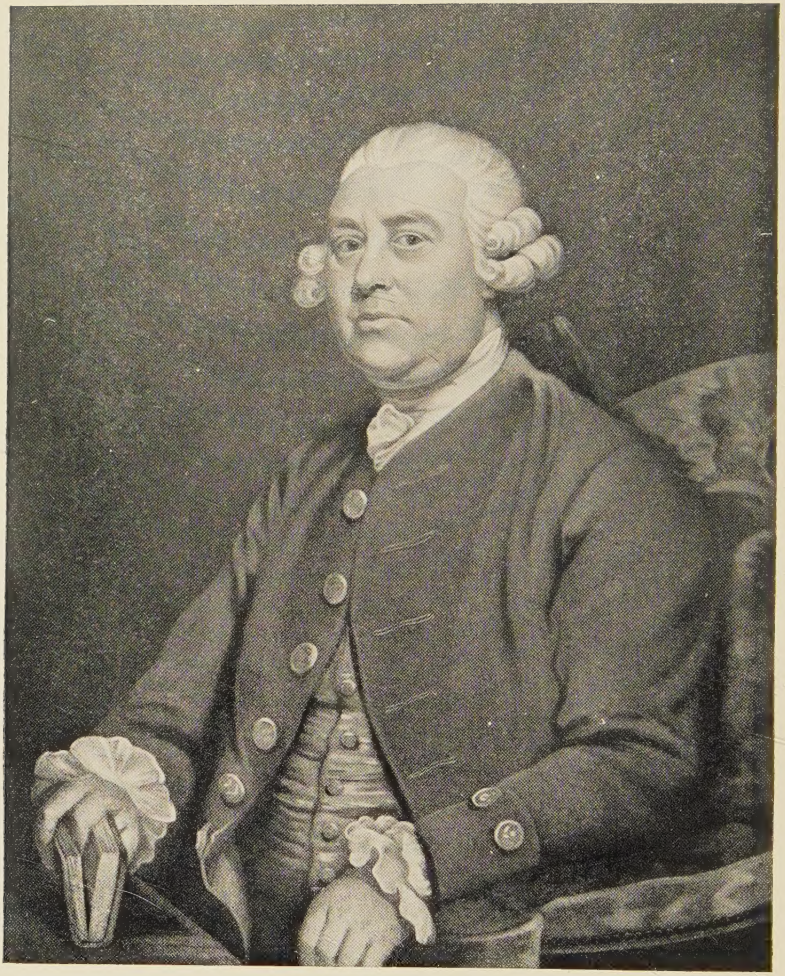

WILLIAM STRAHAN 1715-1785
*From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds*

# THE STORY OF A PRINTING HOUSE

BEING

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE STRAHANS AND SPOTTISWOODES

*SECOND EDITION*

LONDON
SPOTTISWOODE & CO. LTD.
1912

# *PREFACE.*

*In compiling these notes I have made considerable use of the 'Letters of David Hume to William Strahan,' of 'Boswell's Life of Johnson,' and of the 'Letters of Johnson,' all edited by G. Birkbeck Hill; also of the Memoirs of Benjamin Franklin* (1813) *and of his Private Correspondence* (1833). *In addition I have had the advantage of consulting the private account books and ledgers of the firm.*

*R. A. A.-L.*

*July*, 1911.

## *PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.*

*In producing a second edition with additional matter, I desire to express my thanks to Mr. H. L. Bullen, the enthusiastic librarian of the Typographic Library and Museum of the American Type Founders' Company, for bringing to my notice much of William Strahan's earlier correspondence with Franklin and David Hall. My thanks are also due to the proprietors of the 'Sphere' for permission to reproduce Dr. Johnson's last letter to William Strahan, as well as some receipts of his; and to the Governors of the St. Bride Foundation Technical Library for allowing me to reproduce their engraving of William Preston.*

*R. A. A.-L.*

*March*, 1912.

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| 1739 | Journeymens Wages | | | Household Expences | | | Wearing Apparel | | | Household Furniture | | | Printing Materials | | |
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| Total | 234 | | | 86 | 14 | 6 | 15 | 9 | | 16 | 5 | 6 | 30 | | |

| | For the Children | | | Paper, Books, &c | | | Incidental Expences. | | | Money Lent | | | Money Repaid & | | | Total Expended | | | Received for Work, &c | | | Money Borrowed | | | Money Repaid. t | | | Total Received | | | |
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| | | | | | | | | 9 | | | | | | | | | 5 | 19 | 6 | | 11 | 6 | | | | | | | | 11 | 6 | |
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| 6 | | | | | 3 | | | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 5 | 9 | | 9 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 10 | 2 | | |
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| | 3 | 15 | 6 | 73 | 3 | | 24 | 17 | 6 | 2 | 2 | | 250 | 10 | | | 737 | 17 | 6 | 444 | 14 | 6 | 294 | 6 | | 2 | 12 | | 741 | 12 | 6 | |

A Page from William Strahan's Account Book

# THE STORY OF A PRINTING HOUSE

WILLIAM STRAHAN, the founder of the business which in process of time has come to be known as Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd., was a Scotsman by birth, like the founders of so many other printing and publishing firms in the metropolis. Born in Edinburgh on March 24, 1715, he was the son of Alexander Strahan, who had a small appointment in the Customs. 'His father,' according to Nichols, 'gave his son the education which every lad of decent rank then received in a country where the avenues to learning were easy, and open to men of the most moderate circumstances.' Probably William was first sent to the High School, and after serving his apprenticeship to the printing trade in his native town he was enchanted by 'the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees' and took 'the high road that leads to England.'

Of his early struggles in London we have no information, but it is likely that he was not long in finding his feet, for in 1737 he was admitted to the freedom of the Stationers' Company by redemption, and a year later he married Margaret Penelope, daughter of William Elphinston, an episcopalian clergy-

man of Edinburgh, and sister of James Elphinston, who kept a well-known academy for young gentlemen at Kensington House between the years 1753 and 1776.* From the time of his marriage William Strahan's affairs seem to have steadily prospered, and he used to say 'that he never had a child born that Providence did not send some increase of income to provide for the increase of his household.' According to his carefully-kept account book we find him setting up as a printer on his own account with one or two journeymen in 1739, his first apprentice being bound to him on November 6 of that year.† Where he first took offices is not known, but according to the St. Bride's parish register he entered at midsummer 1742 into premises in Wine Office Court. When the chance came in 1748 of renting a private house in New Street, he was ready to take it though it cost him some £400 in repairs and the like. This house must undoubtedly have been the dwelling-house which used to stand until well on in the

* Strahan on one occasion drove Dr. Johnson, Boswell and Mrs. Williams in his coach to dine with James Elphinston, on which occasion, according to Boswell, 'a printer having acquired a fortune sufficient to keep his coach was a good topic for the credit of literature.'

† I cannot find any authority for the statement in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that Strahan became a junior partner of Andrew Millar about 1739 or that he was afterwards a partner of Thomas Cadell the elder. But he did undoubtedly take shares in various publications with these two as well as with other booksellers.

NEW-STREET SQUARE AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD IN 1658

*From W. Faithorne's 'Exact Delineation of Cities of London and Westminster'*

nineteenth century at the corner of Printer Street and Little New Street, with a garden at the back. Next it, in Printer Street, stood Strahan's printing office, which he leased from the Goldsmiths' Company about the year 1753.

### Topographical Note.

The quarter in which William Strahan settled has since become thoroughly identified with the pursuit of the printing trade. But in Strahan's time it seems to have been largely a residential part. The 'New Street' that has since given its name to Great New Street, Middle New Street, Little New Street, New-street Square, New-street Hill, was originally merely the *new* street between Fetter Lane and Shoe Lane. It was in existence at least as early as 1660, for in that year Pepys records a visit 'to Mr. Barlow at his lodgings at the Golden Eagle in the New Street between Fetter Lane and Shoe Lane,' and in October 1666 the parish clerk of St. Bride's mentions in the parish register that there were but sixteen houses in the broad place by New Street. The 'broad place' must have been in all probability what became known in the latter half of the eighteenth century as New-street Square. But indeed all the streets about here have undergone various changes of nomenclature. Thus nearly all the early maps, such as Hollar (1667), Morden and Lea (1682), Maitland (1756) and Noorthouck (1773) mark the present

Great New Street as West Harding Street, while Hollar shows the present Little New Street as East Harding Street. In Maitland's time New-street Square, together with the surrounding property, seems to have been generally known as Goldsmiths' Rents, from the fact that the Goldsmiths' Company were the ground landlords, the land about here having been devised to them by the will of Mrs. Agas Harding, dated January 22, 1513.

In describing this neighbourhood in his 'History of London' Maitland mentions the following streets and alleys:

*Three-leg-alley*, on the Back of *East-harding-street*, and falls into *West-harding-street;* also hath a Passage into *Fleet-street* through *Red-lion-court*. *East-harding-street*, indifferent good, falls into *Goldsmiths-rents*. *Nevil's Alley*, very handsome and well-inhabited . . *Dean-street*, well built and inhabited, falls into *Goldsmiths-rents* . . . *Goldsmiths-rents*, a large Place, containing several Streets and Places of Name, and all well built and inhabited, especially *East-harding-street*, which is more open. This Street falls into *West-harding-street*, as also into *Three-leg-alley*, which is but ordinary.

In this Street are *New-court* and *Goldsmiths-court*, both but small. *Dean-street* falls into *Fetter-lane* out of *East-harding-street*, as aforesaid. *New-street*, a handsome open Place with indifferent good Buildings; of which there are four Streets, and all bearing that Name; one falling into *Shoe-lane;* another which turns Northwards, receives the other two, which comes out of *East-harding-street*. *Gun-powder-alley*, long and narrow, falls into *Shoe-lane*, crossing *Little New-street*, which is but ordinary.

All of this is a little hard to understand, but it seems that in 1756 (which is the date of Maitland's book) the present East Harding Street, Middle New Street, New-street Square, and Little New Street, were all known vaguely as 'New Street.' When the changes in name took place is not known, nor indeed what other changes may have taken place. It is, however, easy to see on the corner of the 'Sphere' and 'Tatler' office that the words 'East Harding Street' half obliterate an older name of '[Gold]smith Row.'

The name Harding no doubt comes from the above-mentioned Mrs. Agas Harding, and the Clerk of the Goldsmiths' Company states that New-street Square, or part of it, was formerly called North Harding Street.

The neighbouring Goldsmith Street is presumably named from the Company, and not from the author; Nevill's Court is named after Ralph Neville, Bishop of Chichester 1222–1244, the bishops of that diocese holding property in these parts (*cf.* Chichester Rents). Pemberton Row is probably named after Sir James Pemberton, a benefactor of the Goldsmiths' Company.

The block of premises in the centre of New-street Square, known as 'Maclean's Buildings,' was built by a certain Maclean about 1854. But there must have been earlier buildings on the same site.

The large block of buildings enclosed by New-street Square, Little New Street, and Shoe

NEW-STREET SQUARE AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD IN 1772

*From Maitland's 'History of London'*

Lane, now occupied by Spottiswoode & Co., originally consisted of some seven houses in New-street Square, eight in Little New Street, and about eight more in Shoe Lane. It was bounded on the north by Richards' Buildings or Cockpit Court (apparently corrupted later into Crockford Court). Here was a well-known cockpit in the seventeenth century, for we find Sir Henry Wotton, the Provost of Eton, saying in a letter dated June 3, 1633, 'This other day at the Cock-pit in Shoe-Lane (where myself am *rara avis*) . . . Mr. Robert Bacon came very kindly to me.'

Behind the houses fronting on Shoe Lane was a larger court known as Falcon Court. The Falcon was evidently a favourite sign in ancient times, for no fewer than six Falcon Courts are enumerated as existing in 1732, and in earlier days we find Wynkyn de Worde using the same sign over his shop in Fleet Street. The earliest mention of 'The Falcon,' Shoe Lane, seems to be as the publishing address of one William Dight in 1612. A sculptured sign with the representation of a falcon, dated 1671, still exists, and has been incorporated in Messrs. Spottiswoode's new building. The date suggests that the court may have been rebuilt after the Great Fire. Strype in 1720 speaks of the court as 'but ordinary,' and Hatton in his 'New View of London,' 1708, says it was a passage into New Street. But the passage no longer exists, and the whole court, together with all the block

THE 'FALCON' SIGN BUILT INTO THE PREMISES OF MESSRS. SPOTTISWOODE & CO. LTD.

mentioned (except the public-house at the south-east corner), has been thrown into the printing office.

The following is Maitland's description of places on the west side of Shoe Lane:

> *Robin-hood-court*, broad and large, mean Houses, and hath a Passage up Steps into *Goldsmiths-rents*. *Cockpit-court*, handsome with Brick Buildings at the upper End, and hath a Free-stone pavement. *Brown's-court*, but small and mean. *Falcon-court*, but ordinary, near the corner of *New-street*.

But to return to William Strahan: business seems to have steadily prospered with him. Quite early in his career we find him printing for such well-known publishers as Andrew Millar and Thomas Longman, and for private customers such as the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield; in 1749 he was printing the 'Monthly Review' for Ralph Griffiths, while in 1755 he placed his name on the title-page of no less important a work than Johnson's Dictionary. In 1760 Benjamin Franklin wrote to his wife that Strahan must be laying by at least a thousand pounds a year, while four years later he congratulates Strahan on enlarging his house and setting up a stable. Nor did William Strahan confine himself to printing. It was an age when publishing hardly existed as a separate trade, and the risks of producing a book were mostly undertaken by booksellers. Strahan struck out into what was practically a new line for a printer by joining the booksellers in taking a share in many of their publications

—no doubt with the proviso that their printing was to come to him. He was eminently successful in these ventures, and by his sound literary judgment and excellent common sense, both as printer and publisher, became the trusted friend and adviser of men of letters like Johnson, Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Adam Smith, Blair, and many another. Nor did he neglect any suitable opening for extending the scope of his operations. Thus in 1757 we find him interesting himself in a newspaper called 'The London Chronicle' or 'Universal Evening Post,' for which Johnson wrote the introduction. Dodsley was one of the proprietors and a letter of his exists to Strahan, in which he withdrew after the eleventh number owing to some matter which he considered scurrilous.* Again in 1762 we find Strahan in partnership with Woodfall engaged in a law printing business, carried on in Clare Street. In 1765 he apparently had hopes, which came to nothing, of becoming printer to the University of Oxford. But in 1766 he was more successful in another quarter—namely, in acquiring a share in the patent of King's Printer. It seems to have been the habit of the Crown to grant reversions of this patent. Thus in 1716 the patent was granted to Mr. John Baskett from January 21, 1770, for a period of 30 years. In 1724 Mr. Eyre (father of Charles Eyre) bought this patent from Mr. Baskett for £10,000.

* 'Robert Dodsley,' by Ralph Straus (1910), pp. 96–98.

Baskett, however, by buying a previous patent from a Mr. Barber, seems to have acted as King's Printer from 1740 to 1770.

As the time drew near for exercising his patent, Mr. Charles Eyre, not being a practical printer, began to look about for someone to help him. His choice fell on William Strahan, who remarks in a letter, dated May 26, 1766, that he is much obliged 'for the preference you give to me in the affair, an obligation which I shall endeavour to return by carrying on the business (when once we are set a-going) to your entire satisfaction.' Strahan paid Mr. Eyre £5000 for a third share of the patent, and was to receive £300 a year for managing the printing office.

The next consideration was to find a King's Printing House. The natural course would have been to secure Mr. Baskett's Printing Press, which was situate at Blackfriars (now the site of the 'Times' office) and which had been the King's Printing House for above a century. But after some discussion this idea was abandoned, and Mr. Strahan's suggestion that 'a much more commodious one [*sc.* press] might be built even upon the spot of ground near me (including the house that already stands upon it)' was adopted.

On June 12, 1767, Strahan writes to his friend David Hall:

> I am now busy about coming to an agreement with the King's Printer, whose Patent commences next January twelvemonth (*sic*), about which I wrote to you some Years

ago, and to which I refer . . . . . This is an Affair of Consequence, which at this time a-day I should hardly think of imbarking in, but that I have Sons in the Business to succeed me. The Gentleman, however, with whom I am to be connected, as well as every Circumstance attending it, is extremely agreeable. And you know it is the most reputable part of our Trade in Britain, which is some Allurement to invite one to be concerned in it.

Building operations were begun in 1767, and on September 22 of that year Strahan writes to Eyre: 'The building goes on extremely well. The timbers for the second storey will be laid in about a week, and the whole covered in by the end of next month. . . . it will be an excellent house, every way more commodious than that in Blackfriars.' This house stood in Printer Street, just opposite Mr. Strahan's own private printing business. The cost of the King's Printing House was £1972 14*s.* 3*d.*

On February 13, 1768, Strahan is writing to David Hall as follows:

My eldest son I have taken into partnership with me last Christmas. George is still at Oxford and hath lately got a Fellowship there . . . . . Andrew makes an excellent Second to his Brother above stairs. And Peg. is now almost ready for a Husband, and will if I mistake not, make a very good wife.

In 1770 the new King's printers began their work, and the 'London Gazette' announced on February 21 that 'His Majesty's printing office is removed from Blackfriars to New Street, near Gough Square in Fleet Street, where all Acts of Parliament, etc., are printed

GATEWAY OF HIS MAJESTY'S PRINTERS.

and sold by Charles Eyre and Wm. Strahan, His Majesty's printers.'

The new business made Strahan exceedingly busy, especially as he began work in the middle of a Session of Parliament. However, he is soon able to inform David Hall that he has little doubt of the business answering every reasonable expectation. Further, the new appointment brought Strahan to the notice of the King, who 'spoke very handsomely of me to a friend of mine, near his Person; in terms indeed, which were I to repeat to you, would look somewhat savouring of Vanity.'

A very good idea of the wide range of Strahan's activities may be gained from the following letter of his to David Hall, dated June 15, 1771:

> The State of my Family and Business is briefly this. My eldest Son William is now, you know, settled by himself, and will, I dare say, do very well; tho' the Printing Trade is by no means a very profitable one. It requires great Industry, Œconomy, Perseverance, and Address, to make any great Figure in it. However he is very clever, has already a good Share of Business, and will, in time succeed to some of the more profitable Branches of it, as his Seniors drop off. My second Son George is now in Orders, and will, I am convinced, make a good Figure in that Walk of Life. My youngest Andrew is the only one now with me, and from whom I receive any assistance in Business. But his Time is almost totally taken up in the Printing-house, in looking after 7, 8, or 9 Presses, which are constantly employed there: For besides the 'Chronicle' and 'Monthly Review' I have always a pretty large Share of Book-work, in many Articles of which I am myself a Proprietor. I have also one half of the Law Printing-house, which is kept, separately, at some Distance from my

OLD JOHN

*Upwards of fifty-four years Porter to His Majesty's Printer*

own House; and as my partner in that, Mr. Woodfall, died about two Years ago, the whole Care of it lies upon me. As doth the Management of the King's Printing-house, my Partner Mr. Eyre not being bred to the Business, and being in the Country. It is true, we have distinct Overseers for both these Branches, to take Care of the Conduct of the Business within Doors. But still the general Management, and the Accounts, of all these Branches, falls to my Share, in which I cannot easily receive much Assistance from any body. Add to all this, the Multiplicity of Concerns I have in the Property of Books (about 200 in Number) which require, every one of them, some Attention, and a separate and distinct Account, and a Variety of Avocations which cannot be particularly enumerated, the Correspondencies I am unavoidably drawn into, and engaged in, and the Share and Attention I am often obliged to take and bestow in the Concerns of others; I say when you consider all these Particulars, you may naturally conclude that my Time is pretty fully engrossed. Indeed it is so much so, that I am casting about how to relieve myself from a Part, at least, of the Labour I have now long sustained, but have not yet been able to fix upon a proper Plan. Sometimes I think of selling all my Property in Copies, and confining my whole Attention to printing. But against this there are great Objections, besides that the State of the Trade here is such, that they are hardly able, after so many large Stocks that have been lately brought to Market, to purchase mine, and of course, the present is a very bad time to bring it to Sale. I must wait a more favorable Season. It is easy to manage one Branch of Business; but nobody in my Way ever before extended it so far as I have done. My Reason was this: I quickly saw, that if I confined myself to mere *printing for Booksellers* I might be able to live, but very little more than live, I therefore soon determined to launch out into other Branches in Connection with my own, in which I have happily succeeded, to the Astonishment of the rest of the Trade here, who never dreamt of going out of the old beaten Track. Thus I have made the Name of *Printer* more respectable than ever it was before, and taught them

to emancipate themselves from the Slavery in which the Booksellers held them. But enough of this. From what I have already said, you may easily conclude, that my Time is pretty well filled up, at a Period of Life too when one's Industry generally begins to flag.

William Strahan's private printing business was always kept quite distinct from his share in the business of Eyre and Strahan, the King's printers, and this distinction explains the fact that at this day the business of Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd. is distinct from that of Eyre & Spottiswoode, Ltd.

Such was the growing prosperity of William Strahan that it was only natural that he should seek to become a Member of Parliament. He had long been diligent in his attendance at the debates of the two Houses, probably with the object of giving a summary in his paper the 'London Chronicle.' His letters to David Hall are full of reports of the speeches made, but he was always liable to be excluded with the rest of the public at particular debates until his partnership in the King's Patent gave him an official right to be present. But even this was not sufficient for him. Accordingly, we find him returned in the Parliament of 1774 for the borough of Malmesbury, in the representation of which he had a distinguished colleague in Charles James Fox. Strahan sat also for Wootton Bassett in the Parliament of 1780, but he entered politics too late to make any great mark, although according to Boswell 'he loved much to be employed in

political negotiation.' He was a supporter of the Coalition Ministry, and in consequence lost his seat in 1784. He died the following year, aged 70.

It is now time to say a few words about Strahan's relations with the eminent writers of his day. For the house in New Street was the scene of many a literary party. Here occurred the unsuccessful meeting between Dr. Johnson and Adam Smith; here Thomas Somerville came to dine in 1769, meeting David Hume, Sir John Pringle, Benjamin Franklin, and Mrs. Thrale; and here we can think of Dr. Johnson calling 'to do a little business,' which we may imagine to have been either the raising of a temporary loan, or the return of a corrected proof; or we may think of the Doctor and his biographer breakfasting here, and of the former enlarging *more suo* on Strahan's statement that small certainties were the bane of men of talents. The house, too, was the scene of more exciting events, when, at the time of the Gordon riots, Strahan got a garrison into the house and maintained them for a fortnight.

Chief among Strahan's friends, as we are on the subject of printing, we may place Benjamin Franklin, who was the foremost man in the printing trade in America just as Strahan was in England. Franklin first came to London in 1724, working for a year and a half as a journeyman printer at Palmer's in Bartholomew Close, and at Watts' in Lincoln's Inn Fields,

while Strahan was still a lad in Edinburgh. Franklin therefore cannot have met Strahan until his second visit to London in 1757. But by this time they had been in regular correspondence with each other for fourteen years. As early as 1743 Strahan had written a letter to a Mr. Read recommending a certain David Hall, who had probably been one of his fellow apprentices, and was perhaps then one of his employés. Mr. Read sent word of this to Benjamin Franklin, who thereupon wrote to Strahan as follows:

Philadelphia, July 10/43.

Sir,

Mr. Read has communicated to me part of a letter from you, recommending a young man whom you would be glad to see in better business than that of a Journeyman Printer. I have already three Printing Houses in three different Colonies, and purpose to set up a fourth if I can meet with a proper Person to manage it, having all materials for that purpose. If the young man will venture over hither, that I may see and be acquainted with him, we can treat about the Affair, and I make no doubt but he will think my Proposals reasonable. If we should not agree I promise him however a Twelve month's good Work, and to defray Passage back if he inclines to return to England.

I am, Sir, your huml. Servt. unknown,

B. Franklin.

David Hall evidently thought the voyage worth the venture, for a year later (July 4, 1744) we find Franklin writing to Strahan to the effect that 'Mr. Hall' is arrived 'two weeks since,' and the letter continues:

I make no doubt but his voyage, though it has been expensive, will prove advantageous to him. I have already

made him some proposals, which he has under consideration, and as we are like to agree on them, we shall not, I believe, differ on the article of his passage money. I am much obliged to you for your care and pains in procuring me the founding tools; though I think, with you, that the workmen have not been bashful in making their bills. I have long wanted a friend in London, whose judgment I could depend on, to send me from time to time such new pamphlets as are worth reading on any subject (religious controversy excepted), for there is no depending on titles and advertisements. This favour I take the freedom to beg of you, and shall lodge money in your hands for that purpose.

The correspondence between the American and English printer gradually spread from purely business matters to political and family subjects. Thus, in September, 1746, Franklin is congratulating Strahan on the defeat of Jacobitism 'by your glorious Duke,' and sending his own and his wife's 'thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Strahan and young master for your kindness to our Daughter.' As early, too, as 1750 the marriage of Strahan's son to Franklin's daughter had become a matter of joke.

But before this (*i.e.* in 1747) we find Franklin hoping to come the following year to London to make Strahan's acquaintance. Each year, however, saw the promised visit deferred and it was not till July, 1757, that Franklin reached London, and was able to write to his wife that he had just seen Mr. Strahan, who was well, with his family.

The friendship, begun through letters, became the greater on personal acquaintance,

until in 1760 Strahan wrote to Franklin, proposing in earnest what had previously been a matter of jest—namely, the marriage of his eldest son to Miss Sally Franklin. Franklin sent on Strahan's letter to his wife, to whom he wrote as follows:

To Mrs. Deborah Franklin.

London, March 5, 1760.

My dear Child,

I receiv'd the Enclos'd some time since from Mr. Strahan. I afterwards spent an Evening in Conversation with him on the Subject. He was very urgent with me to stay in England and prevail with you to remove hither with Sally. He propos'd several advantageous Schemes to me, which appear'd reasonably founded. His Family is a very agreeable one; Mrs. Strahan a sensible and good Woman, the Children of amiable Characters, and particularly the young Man, [who is] sober, ingenious, and industrious, and a [desirable] Person. In Point of Circumstances there can be no Objection; Mr. Strahan being [now] living a Way as to lay up a Thousand Pounds every Year from the Profits of his Business, after maintaining his Family and paying all Charges. I gave him, however, two Reasons why I could not think of removing hither. One, my Affection to Pensilvania, and long established Friendships and other connections there: The other, your invincible Aversion to crossing the Seas. And without removing hither, I could not think of parting with my Daughter to such a Distance. I thank'd him for the Regard shown us in the Proposal; but gave him no Expectation that I should forward the Letters. So you are at liberty to answer or not, as you think proper. Let me however know your Sentiments. You need not deliver the Letter to Sally, if you do not think it proper.

Franklin and Strahan must often have met between the years 1757 and 1762, and again from 1764 to 1775, while the former was in

England, but a cloud came over their friendship when hostilities broke out between England and her colonies. Franklin gave way to his feelings in the following outburst:

Philadelphia, July 5, 1775.

MR. STRAHAN,

You are a Member of Parliament, and one of that Majority which has doomed my Country to Destruction. You have begun to burn our Towns and murder our People. Look upon your Hands! They are stained with the Blood of your Relations! You and I were long friends—You are now my Enemy—and

I am, yours,

B. FRANKLIN.*

But the correspondence of the old friends was resumed at the end of 1781, when Franklin writes on December 9 from Passy, to the effect that he is glad to hear that Strahan has married his daughter happily [i.e. to John Spottiswoode in 1779] and that his prosperity continues. 'I hope,' he writes, 'that it may never meet with any interruption, having still, though at present divided by public circumstances, a remembrance of our ancient private friendship.'†

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* There is a note, however, by the Editor of the *Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin* (1906) to the effect that this letter was written but never sent.

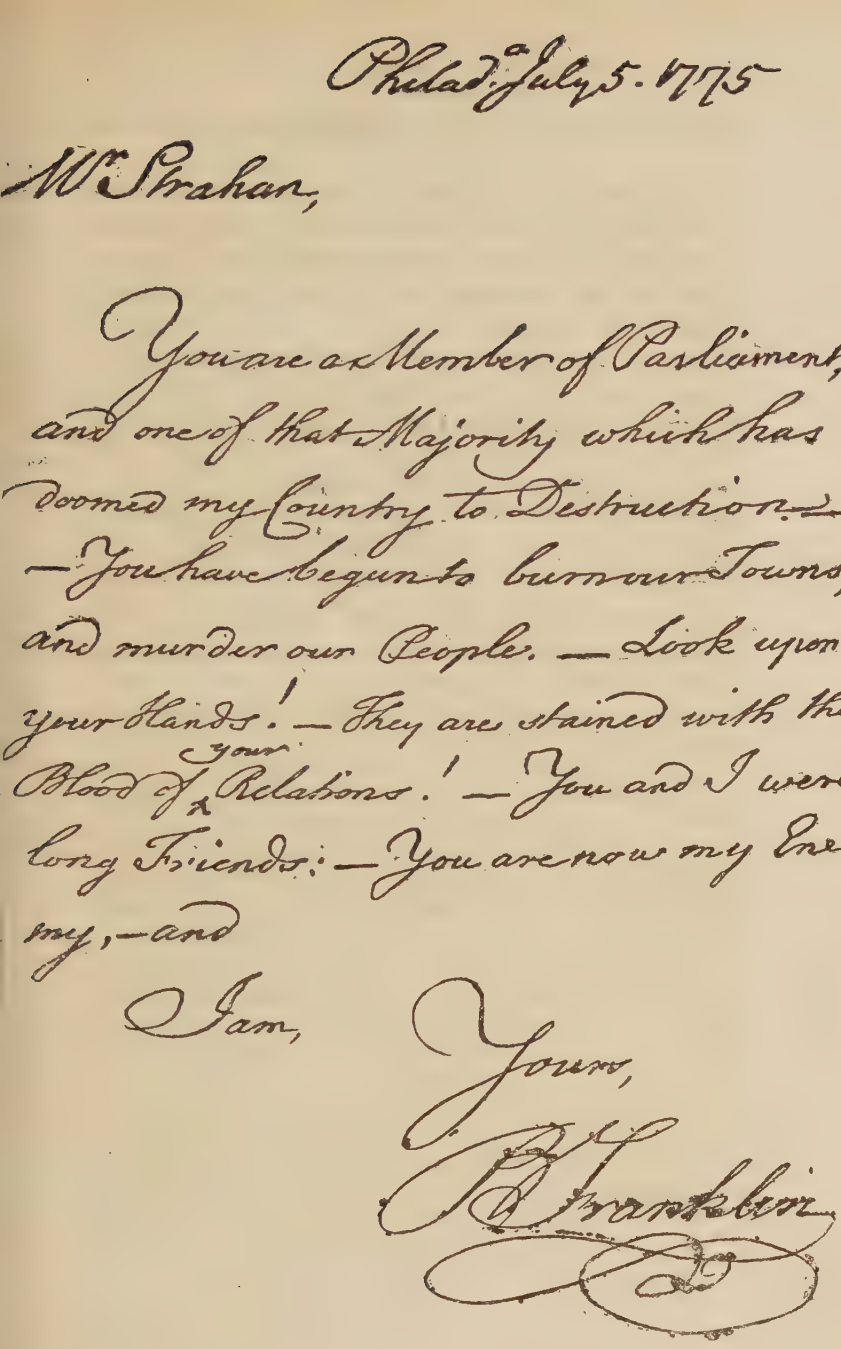
† This letter begins 'Dear Sir,' in contrast with the 'Dear Straney' of former days.

When peace came the old relations were once more restored, and we find Franklin on February 16, 1784, commenting on the state of affairs in England in a letter full of typographical expressions :

Those places [of power] (he writes), to speak in our old stile (brother type), may be good for the CHAPEL but they are bad for the master, as they create constant quarrels that hinder the business. For example, here are two months that your Government has been employed in *getting its form to press*, which is not yet fit to *work on*, every page of it being *squabbled*, and the whole ready to fall into *pye*. The *founts*, too, must be very scanty or strangely *out of sorts*, since your *compositors* cannot find either *upper-* or *lower-case* letters sufficient to set the word ADMINISTRATION, but are forced to be continually *turning for them*.

One more letter from Franklin to Strahan, written on August 19, 1784, will bear quoting :

I remember your observing once to me, as we sat together in the House of Commons, that no two journeymen printers within your knowledge had met with such success in the world as ourselves. You were then at the head of your profession, and soon afterwards became a Member of Parliament ; I was agent for a few provinces, and now act for them all. But we have risen by different modes. I, as a republican printer, always liked a form well *planed down*, being averse to those *overbearing* letters that hold their heads so *high* as to hinder their neighbours from appearing. You, as a monarchist, chose to work upon *crown* paper, and found it profitable ; while I worked upon *pro patria* (often indeed called *fools-cap*) with no less advantage. Both our *heaps hold out* very well, and we seem likely to make a pretty good day's work of it.


Philad.a July 5. 1775

Mr Strahan,

You are a Member of Parliament, and one of that Majority which has doomed my Country to Destruction. — You have begun to burn our Towns, and murder our People. — Look upon your Hands! — They are stained with the Blood of your Relations! — You and I were long Friends: — You are now my Enemy, — and

I am,

Yours,

B Franklin

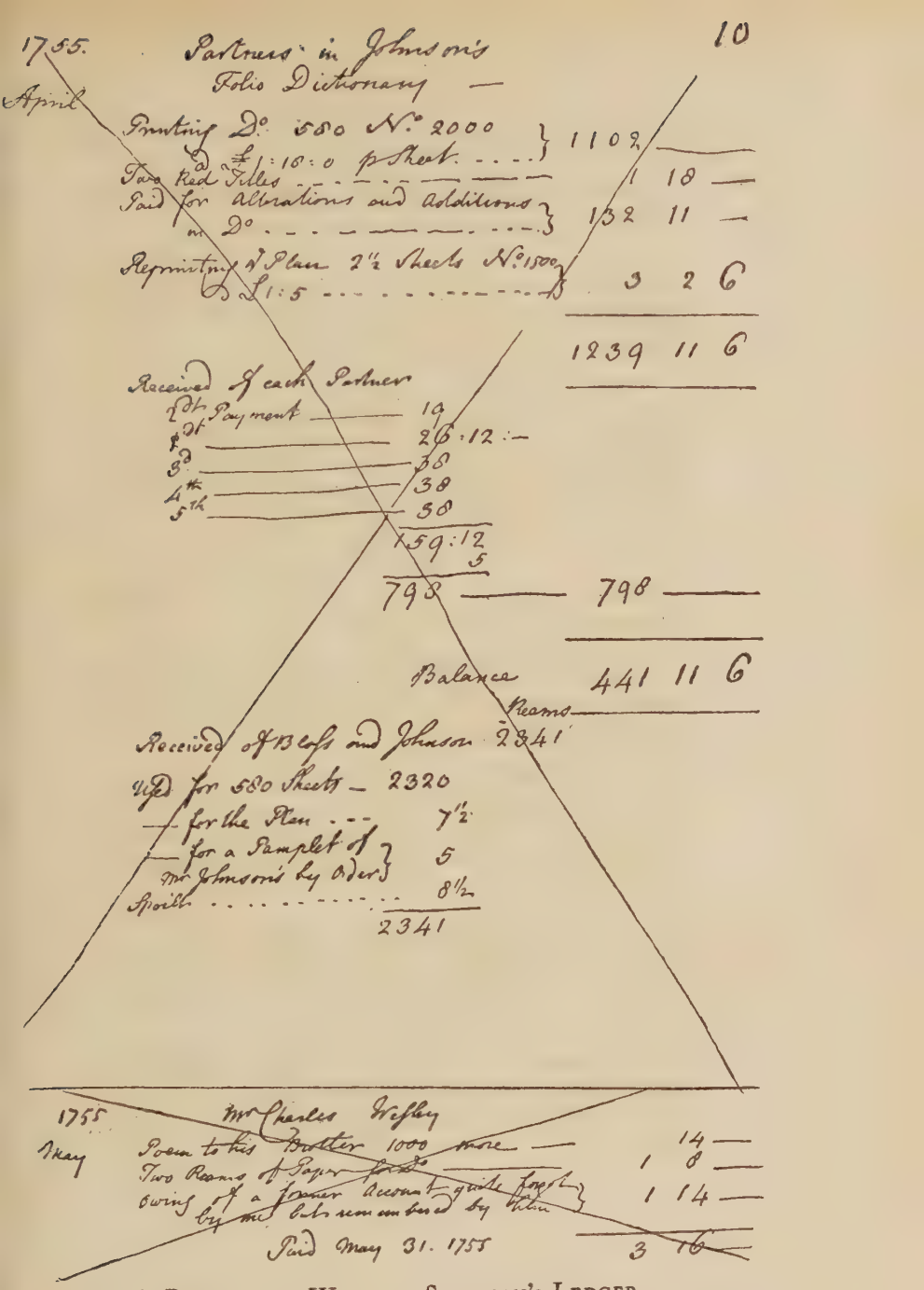
A Letter from Benjamin Franklin to William Strahan

Of Strahan's English friends, Dr. Johnson and David Hume were probably the greatest.

With Dr. Johnson the acquaintance must have begun as early as 1748 over the printing of his Dictionary. Johnson, it is well known, fell out with most of his publishers—chiefly because of his own dilatoriness in supplying copy—and finally it was arranged that Strahan, who was printing the work, was to pay him on their behalf one guinea for every sheet of MS. copy delivered. In this connexion the name of one of Strahan's compositors has survived, a 'Mr. Manning, a decent sensible man, who had composed about one half of his [Johnson's] Dictionary when in Mr. Strahan's printing house.' Later on, when Manning was in Mr. Baldwin's printing house, Johnson found fault with him, but made the *amende honorable*, saying 'Mr. Compositor, I ask your pardon, Mr. Compositor, I ask your pardon again and again.'*

When Strahan issued the 'London Chronicle' in 1756 he paid Johnson a guinea for writing the introduction, and further in 1759, in connexion with the booksellers Johnston and Dodsley, he bought 'Rasselas' for £100, with £25 more when it ran to a second

* Another of Mr. Strahan's employés was Mr. Lenox, the husband of the well-known Mrs. Charlotte Lenox, or Lennox, author of *The Female Quixote*, published in 1752. (See Fielding, *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, edited by Austin Dobson in the 'World's Classics' 1907, p. 157 *note*.)


1755. Partners in Johnson's 10
April Folio Dictionary —
Printing Do. 580 No. 2000
£1:10:0 p Sheet
Two Red Titles
Paid for Alterations and additions
in Do.
Reprinting 1 Plate 2½ Sheets No. 1500
£1:5
1102 — —
1 18 —
132 11 —
3 2 6
1239 11 6
Received of each Partner
1st Payment 19
2d 26:12:—
3d 38
4th 38
5th 38
159:12
5
798 — 798 —
Balance 441 11 6
Reams
Received of Bell and Johnson 2341
Used for 580 Sheets 2320
for the Plan 7½
for a Pamplet of Mr Johnson's by Order 5
Spoilt 8½
2341
1755 Mr Charles Wesley
May Poem to his Brother 1000 more — 14 —
Two Reams of Paper for do 1 8 —
owing to a former account not charged by me but remembered by him 1 14 —
Paid May 31. 1755 3 16 —

A Page from William Strahan's Ledger

edition. Johnson writes on January 20, 1759:

Sir,

When I was with you last night I told you of a story which I was preparing for the press. The title will be

'The Choice of Life, *or*
'The History of . . . Prince of Abissinia.'

I shall have occasion for £30 on Monday night when I shall deliver the book, which I must entreat you upon such delivery to procure me. . . . I would not print my name but expect it to be known.

I am, dear Sir,
Your most humble servant,
Jan. 20, 1759. Sam. Johnson.

Get me the money if you can.

In 1774 we find Dr. Johnson trying to secure a place in Strahan's office for a lad he was interested in:

You will please to remember (he writes) that I once asked you to receive an apprentice, who is a scholar, and has always lived in a clergyman's house, but who is mis-shapen, though I think not so as to hinder him at the case.

Strahan took in the lad, whose name was William Davenport, and Johnson is found writing to a friend on April 3, 1775, saying:

I have placed young Davenport in the greatest printing house in London, and hear no complaint of him but want of size, which will not hinder him much. He may when he is a journeyman always get a guinea a week.

Jan 22. 1784

I received of William Strahan Esq; one hundred and fifty pounds, in full for the copyright of my Journey to the Hebrides, for which I promise to give him a regular assignation when demanded

Sam: Johnson

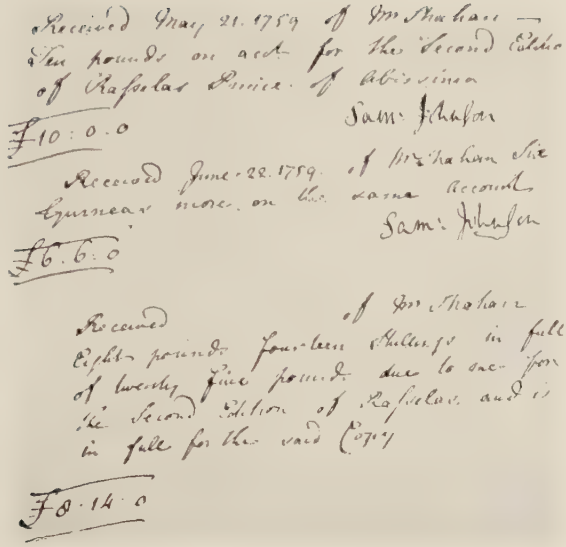
£150-0-0

A Receipt from Dr. Johnson for £150 for his 'Journey to the Hebrides'

One day when Johnson was at Strahan's house, he asked after the lad, who was brought down, and 'in the courtyard behind Mr. Strahan's house' presented with five guineas by the Doctor, who had previously borrowed the money from William Strahan.

In fact, Strahan was constantly doing what he could for Johnson, even writing in 1771 to one of the Secretaries of the Treasury, to try to get Johnson a seat in Parliament. It was not in the great Doctor's nature to be always grateful, and he showed his less pleasant side when he said, *à propos* of Strahan's having become a Member of Parliament, 'I employ Strahan to frank my letters that he may have the consequence of appearing as a Parliament man'; and when, being told that Strahan was very intimate with Warburton, he said, 'Why, Sir, he has printed some of his works and perhaps bought the property of some of them. The intimacy is such as one of the professors here [Aberdeen] may have with one of the carpenters who is repairing the college.' Referring on a later occasion to this Dr. Beattie wrote:

> I cannot but take notice of a very illiberal saying of Johnson with respect to the late Mr. Strahan . . . who was a man to whom Johnson had been much obliged, and whom on account of his abilities and virtues, as well as rank in life, every one who knew him (and Johnson as well as others) acknowledged to be a most respectable character. He was eminently skilled in composition, and the English language; excelled in the

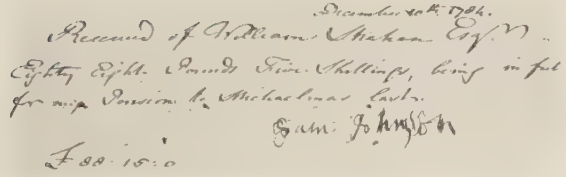


Received May 21. 1759 of Mr Strahan —
Ten pounds on acct for the Second Edition
of Rasselas Prince of Abissinia
Sam: Johnson
£10:0:0

Received June 28. 1759 of Mr Strahan Six
Guineas more on the same Account
Sam: Johnson
£6:6:0

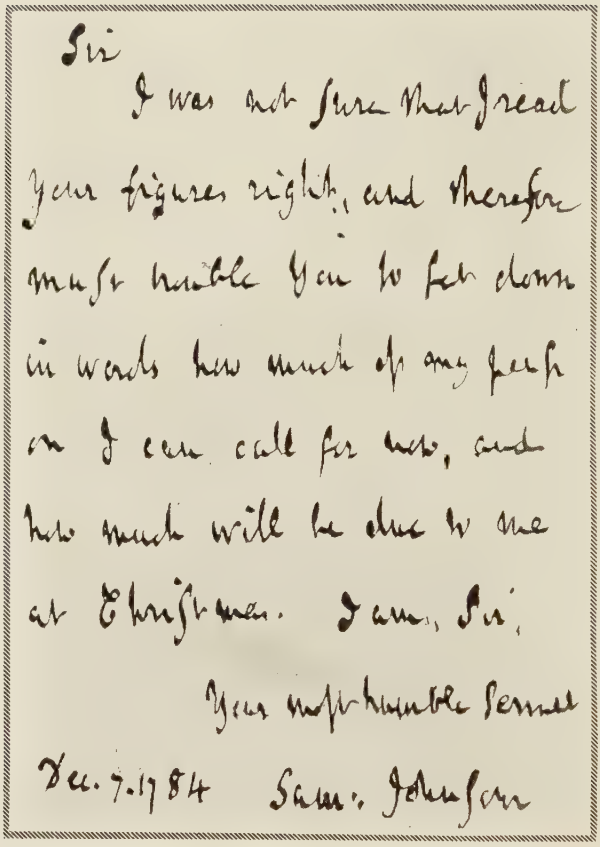
Received of Mr Strahan
Eight pounds fourteen Shillings in full
of twenty five pounds due to me from
the Second Edition of Rasselas and is
in full for the said Copy
£8:14:0

RECEIPT GIVEN BY DR. JOHNSON FOR 'RASSELAS'



December 10th 1784.
Received of William Strahan Esqr —
Eighty Eight Pounds Five Shillings, being in full
for my Pension to Michaelmas last.
Sam: Johnson
£88:15:0

DR. JOHNSON'S LAST RECEIPT FOR HIS PENSION


Sir

I was not sure that I read your figures right, and therefore must trouble You to set down in words how much of my pension I can call for now, and how much will be due to me at Christmas. I am, Sir,

Your most humble Servant

Dec. 7. 1784 Sam.l Johnson

Last Letter from Dr. Johnson to Strahan

epistolary style; had corrected (as he told me himself) the phraseology of both Mr. Hume and Dr. Robertson; he was a faithful friend, and his great knowledge of the world and of business made him a very useful one.

Finally even Strahan's patience gave way, and over some matter which is not revealed a coolness sprang up which lasted from March to July in the year 1778, and which was ended by the following letter from Johnson:

Sir,

It would be very foolish for us to continue strangers any longer. You can never by persistency make wrong right. If I resented too acrimoniously, I resented only to myself. Nobody ever saw or heard what I wrote. You saw that my anger was over, for in a day or two I came to your house. I have given you longer time, and I hope you have made so good use of it as to be no longer on evil terms with, Sir,

Your, etc.,

Sam. Johnson.

'On this,' said Mr. Strahan, 'I called upon him and he has since dined with me.' At the end of Dr. Johnson's life, Strahan seems to have been the channel through which the Doctor received his pension.

But of all Strahan's literary friends it is probable that he was most intimate with David Hume. The acquaintance began in a correspondence over the printing of the second volume of Hume's 'History' in 1756, and lasted till the latter's death in 1776. Hume did not take long to measure Strahan's intellectual powers, for in 1757, before he had even seen him, he was asking him to mark any doubts

that occurred to him with regard to style or argument. They probably met for the first time in the autumn of 1758. Three years later Hume was hoping to visit Strahan,

> and then you may expect to have a very troublesome dun upon you, in making demands of a regular visit of your Devil; and I shall be able to cure you of some indolence which, as our friend opposite Catherine Street in the Strand [*sc.* A. Millar] complains to me, is growing upon you. If this indolence comes from Riches, I hope also to cure it another way, by gaining your money at whist.

Strahan became Hume's frequent correspondent, keeping him supplied with the news of all that was taking place in the political world in London. So much did Hume come to lean on Strahan, that he wrote to him in 1771:

> If you have leisure to peruse the sheets and to mark on the margin any corrections that occur to you, it will be an addition to the many obligations of the same kind, which I owe to you.

And when the volume was drawing to a conclusion, Hume writes:

> I cannot forbear giving you many and hearty thanks, both for your submitting to so troublesome a method of printing, and for the many useful corrections you have sent me. I suppose since the days of Aldus, Reuchlin, and Stephens there have been no printers who could have been useful to their authors in this particular.

But, as was the case with Johnson and Franklin, Strahan's relations with Hume were not destined to be always smooth. Hume made some aspersions on Strahan's honesty

which his friend was quick to resent. Writing on March 19, 1773, the latter remarks :

After having been most unfeignedly attached to you ever since I had the pleasure of your acquaintance ; after having done everything in my power to oblige you ; after having given the most careful attention to your works when under my press, for which I received your repeated acknowledgements ; and after having behaved to you in the most open, candid, and ingenuous manner upon every occasion since I became a proprietor in your works ; I did not, I could not expect to be told by you, after all, that I was a lying scoundrel, who had constantly deceived you, to whom you could give no manner of credit, etc., etc.

Hume replied on March 24 :

There is no man of whom I entertain a better opinion, nor whose friendship I desire more to preserve, nor indeed any one to whom I have owed more essential obligations. . . . I again beg of you to be assured of my sincere sentiments on this head, and entreat the continuance or rather the renewal of your friendship ; a word which I once hoped would never have entered into our correspondence.

Peace was restored, and when he died Hume left his MSS. to the care of Strahan, 'trusting to the friendship that has long subsisted between us for his careful and faithful execution of my intentions.'

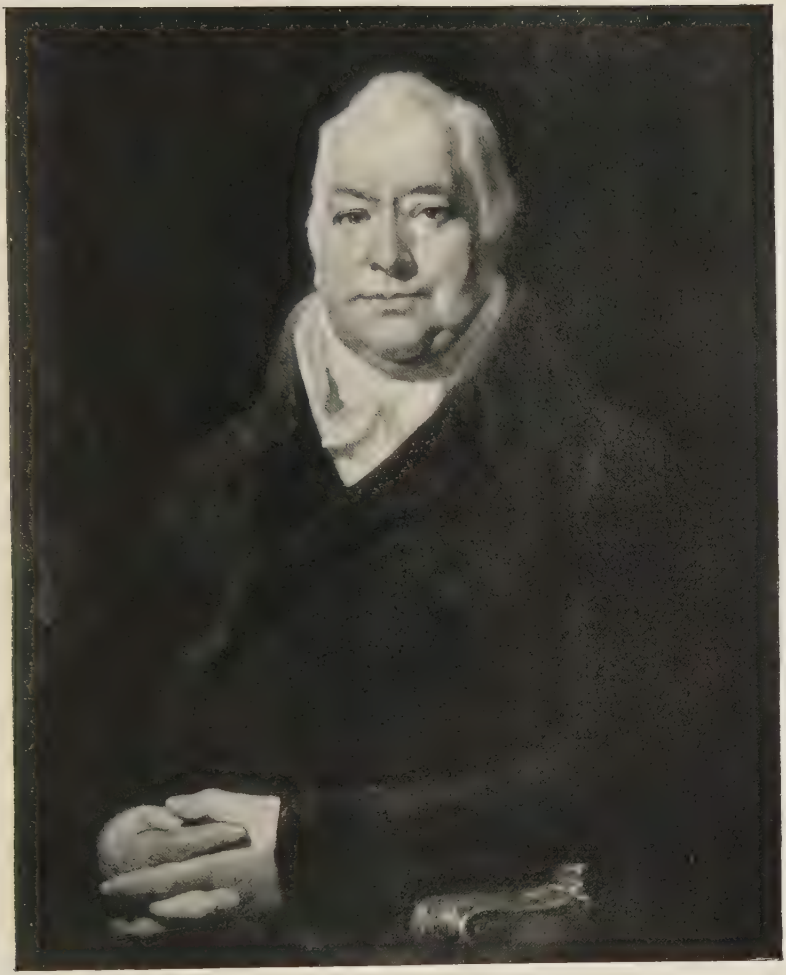
As to his relations with Gibbon, for whom Strahan not only printed but in conjunction with Cadell published the 'Decline and Fall,' we must be content with giving one extract from the historian's works :

The volume of my 'History,' which had been somewhat delayed by the novelty and tumult of a first

session, was now ready for the press. After the perilous adventure had been declined by my friend Mr. Elmsley, I agreed, upon easy terms, with Mr. Thomas Cadell, a respectable bookseller, and Mr. William Strahan, an eminent printer; and they undertook the care and risk of the publication, which derived more credit from the name of the shop than from that of the author. The last revisal of the proofs was submitted to my vigilance; and many blemishes of style, which had been invisible in the manuscript, were discovered and corrected in the printed sheet. So moderate were our hopes that the original impression had been stinted to five hundred, till the number was doubled by the prophetic taste of Mr. Strahan.

When William Strahan died in 1785 he left behind him a fortune of about £100,000, and among his chief assets were his own printing business, his share in the King's Patent, his half share in the Law Patent, his one-twentieth share in the 'Public Advertiser,' and his one-ninth in the 'London Chronicle.' He bequeathed the sum of £1000 to the Stationers' Company, of which he had been Master in 1774.

Eight children had been born to William and Margaret Strahan, but three had died in early childhood, and William, the eldest son, who had set up a printing business of his own on Snow Hill, had died in 1781, leaving no sons. The second son, George, who was destined for the Church, had been placed, with the help of Dr. Johnson, as a Commoner at University College, Oxford. Franklin showed



Andrew Strahan 1750-1831
*From a painting by William Owen*

his interest in all that concerned Strahan by writing on June 10, 1763:

> Tell me whether George is to be a Church or Presbyterian parson ; I know you are a Presbyterian yourself, but then I think you have more sense than to stick him into a priesthood that admits of no promotion. If he was a dull lad, it might not be amiss, but George has parts, and ought to aim at a mitre.

Sure enough, George went into the Church of England, but never attained to the dignity of a mitre. His father purchased for him the living of Islington. Here he remained for many years, frequently visiting and receiving visits from Dr. Johnson, whom he attended on his death-bed.

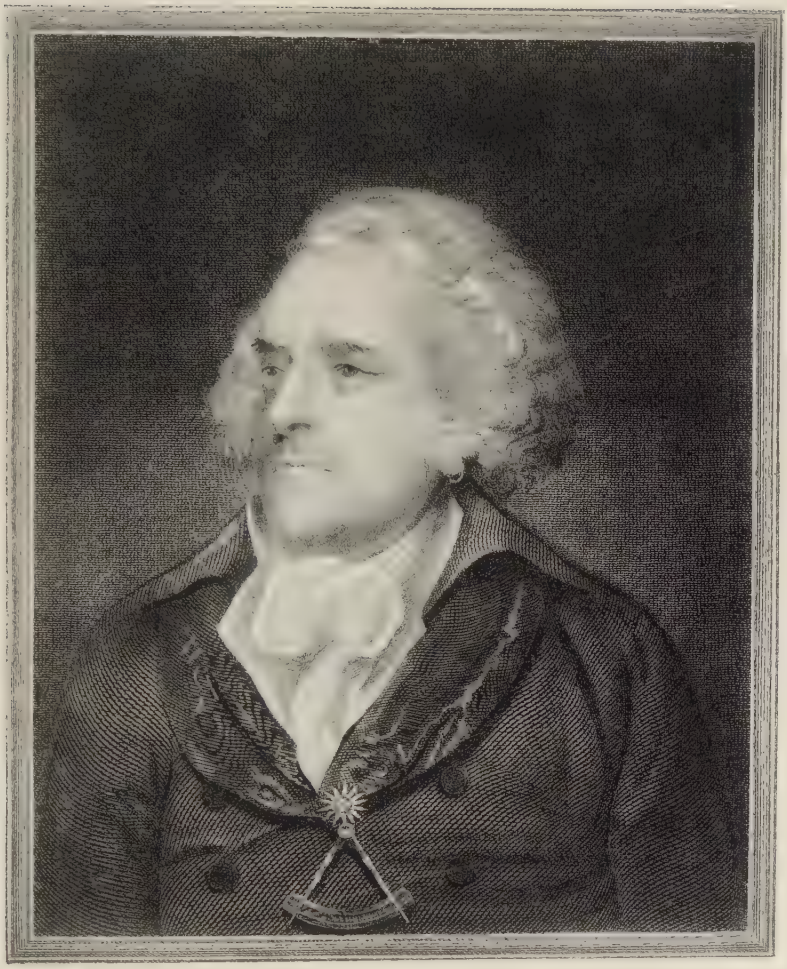
The third son, Andrew, born in 1750, succeeded to the business, in which he had already been taking an active part for several years before his father's death. Like his father he was joint publisher (with Cadell) of many important works, and, like his father, he added politics to business, sitting between the years 1796 and 1820 successively for so wide a range of constituencies as Newport, Wareham, Carlow, Aldeburgh and New Romney.

Andrew Strahan is said to have inherited 'his father's professional eminence, his political attachments, his consistency of public conduct, and his private virtues. By his generous encouragement of genius he attained the very highest rank of his profession, and became equally eminent for the correctness of his typography and the liberality of his dealings.'

When the growth of his general printing business made it necessary in 1800 for Andrew Strahan to extend his premises, he found conveniently adjacent buildings at 6 and 7 Newstreet Square, long known as the New House, and took the first step in getting possession of a block of houses that have ever since in a steadily increasing measure been identified with the business.

In the year 1804 Andrew Strahan took William Preston into partnership. William Preston was a man of some mark in his day. Born in Edinburgh in 1742, he had been apprenticed to Walter Ruddiman, the well-known printer, but on completing his time had journeyed south with letters of recommendation to William Strahan, who gave him work as a corrector of the press. Andrew Strahan had employed him as chief reader and manager, finally making him a salaried partner. Besides his proficiency as a printer, Preston was a prominent freemason. In 1772 he published 'Illustrations of Freemasonary,' a work that achieved great popularity, and went through numerous editions. Preston died in Dean Street, Fetter Lane, 1st April, 1818.

As Andrew Strahan had no children, and his brother George only had daughters, successors in the business had to be found in the family of their sister, Margaret Penelope, who had married in 1779 John Spottiswoode of Spottiswoode.



William Preston 1742-1818
*From a painting by S. Drummond*

### The Spottiswoode Family.

Margaret Strahan had married into a family not undistinguished in the annals of Scottish history. The Spottiswoodes trace themselves back to a Robert Spottiswood, who possessed the barony of Spottiswood, Berwickshire, in the reign of Alexander III. One Spottiswood had been killed at Flodden Field in 1513, another had placed the crown on the head of young James VI. at Stirling in 1567; a third had been Archbishop successively of Glasgow and St. Andrews and the right-hand man of James I. and Charles I. in all ecclesiastical matters in Scotland; a fourth, captured at the battle of Philiphaugh, had been tried by Parliament for treason and executed in 1646 at the market cross of St. Andrews. Nor had their fame been confined to Scotland, for a cadet of the house had been a celebrated lieutenant-governor of the colony of Virginia, whose name is to this day kept alive by the district of Spotsylvania, and whose expedition across the unknown mountains of Virginia is recorded in the lines telling of the exploits of the band—

> That rode with Spotswood 'round the land,
> And Smith around the sea.

Yet another member of the family had been a well-known advocate and writer on legal subjects, and this John Spottiswoode is said to have written the preface to Watson's 'History of Printing' published in 1713: probably he was the same Mr. John Spottiswoode who

sold in 1706 a printing press which he had established for printing law books to Robert Fairbairn of Edinburgh.

But whatever the earlier interest of the family in the art of printing, they probably had little actual experience of it as a trade until Andrew and Robert, the fourth and fifth sons of John and Margaret Spottiswoode, born in 1787 and 1791 respectively, succeeded in 1819 their uncle, Andrew Strahan, in the active management of the private printing business, and in a share of the King's Patent. Though Andrew Strahan retired from active business he continued to reside at his house in Little New Street till his death in 1831.

Of the two brothers Andrew had already been associated with his uncle for some ten years, so that he was doubtless fully qualified to control the business.

One of the first steps taken by the Spottiswoodes was to instal steam printing. Thus in 1819 we find them purchasing from Maudslay a steam engine at a cost of £782, as well as a patent perfecting cylinder machine from Applegath for £1200, and a foundry for £735. Writing of printing machinery, Mr. Hansard says:

> Mr. Spottiswoode, who has for some time had a steam engine and printing machine upon the construction first-mentioned in this chapter [*i.e.* cylindrical], has also (impelled by the same engine) a machine of a new construction in one material respect, which possesses, in my opinion, the principle by which better work may be effected than by any of the others, but not with such

ANDREW SPOTTISWOODE 1787-1866
*From a painting by Thomas Phillips, R.A.*

rapidity. The impression is by a platen moving vertically; it has a self-acting tympan and frisket; and appeared to me doing at the rate of six or seven hundred per hour, one side, in excellent style of work.*

The size of the Spottiswoodes' plant may be roughly guessed from the fact that in 1820 they paid a subscription to the master printers on twenty-four presses.

The following reference to the two brothers occurs in a letter from William Blackwood, the publisher, to Theodore Hook, dated January 28, 1822, concerning the printing of a novel by the latter:

But I must now say something about what is of more consequence, the getting the work quickly published. I should have been most happy to have employed Messrs. Shackle & Arrowsmith; but, in present circumstances, I agree with you that it would not be advisable it should come from their press. To save time, I wrote to Messrs. A. & R. Spottiswoode, inquiring if they could undertake and print rapidly a novel of much about the same size as the 'Pirate.' I had their answer a few days ago, in which they say they could do 10 or 12 sheets a week, or even more if necessary, if the proofs were regularly returned. Messrs. Spottiswoode are the nephews and successors of Mr. Hunter Blair, the King's printer, and theirs is one of the most respectable houses in London. I hope the author can have no objection to them, as I would prefer them much to any other. Should this, therefore, be agreeable, the sooner they receive a portion of the MS. the better.†

* Hansard's *Typographia* (1825), p. 709.

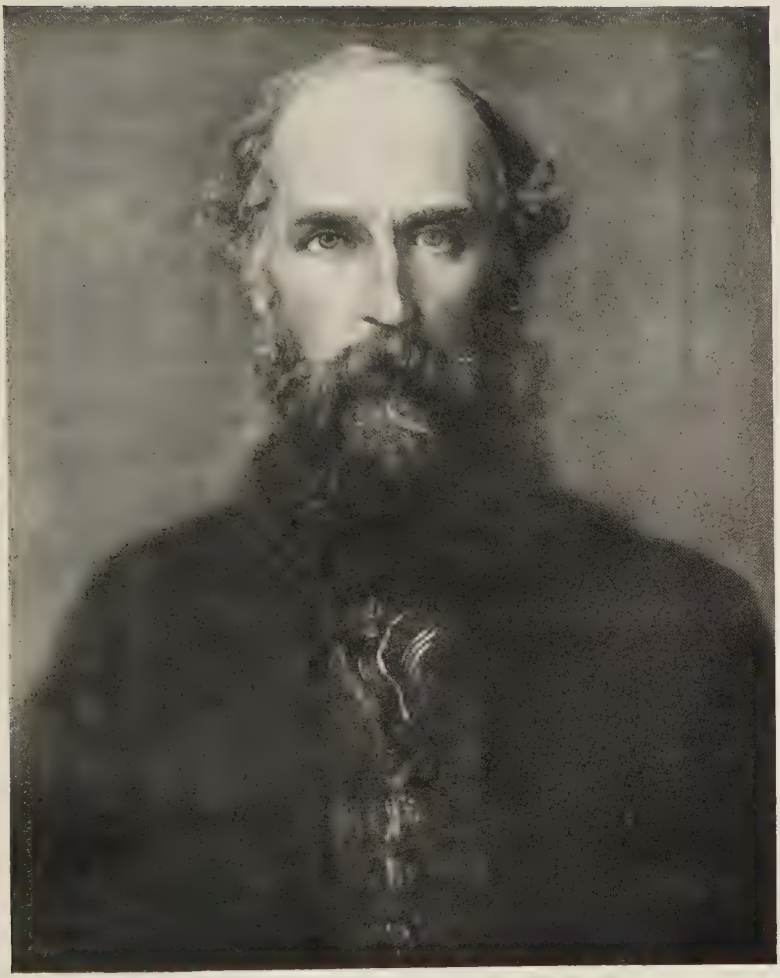
† *William Blackwood and his Sons*, by Mrs. Oliphant, Vol. II. p. 15. This is a curious mistake of William Blackwood's, as the Spottiswoodes were the nephews and successors of Andrew Strahan, the King's Printer. The Hunter-Blair family held the patent as King's Printers in Scotland.

The partnership of the two brothers lasted only thirteen years, and was ended by the sudden death on September 2, 1832, of Robert Spottiswoode, after a few days' illness at Carlisle, while travelling to Scotland.

Andrew Spottiswoode was thus left in sole control of the business, which seems to have steadily grown in size if we may judge by the way in which additional premises in the block between New-street Square and Shoe Lane were gradually acquired and re-built.

An unpleasant episode in the history of the firm was a fire that occurred in the warehouse (a new building erected in 1828) on March 21, 1837. An account in the 'Morning Chronicle' on the following day gives a sidelight on the operations of the firm in those days:

Yesterday morning, about half-past eight, during the absence of the men, who had gone to breakfast, flames were observed through the windows of the ground floor of the extensive warehouses of Messrs. Spottiswoode, the printers, in New-street Square, off the north side of Fleet Street. The alarm was immediately given at the dwelling and counting-houses at the other end of the Square, and messengers were without delay dispatched for the engines, which very speedily arrived; and, a plentiful supply of water having been obtained, they soon began to play upon the flames with considerable effect. . . . By ten o'clock the flames were entirely subdued. . . . The property destroyed chiefly consists of books and papers packed up in parcels and stowed away in this part of the premises. . . . These premises are distinct from those appropriated to the Government printing, called the King's printing house, so that nothing whatever connected



WILLIAM SPOTTISWOODE 1825-1883
*From a painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.*

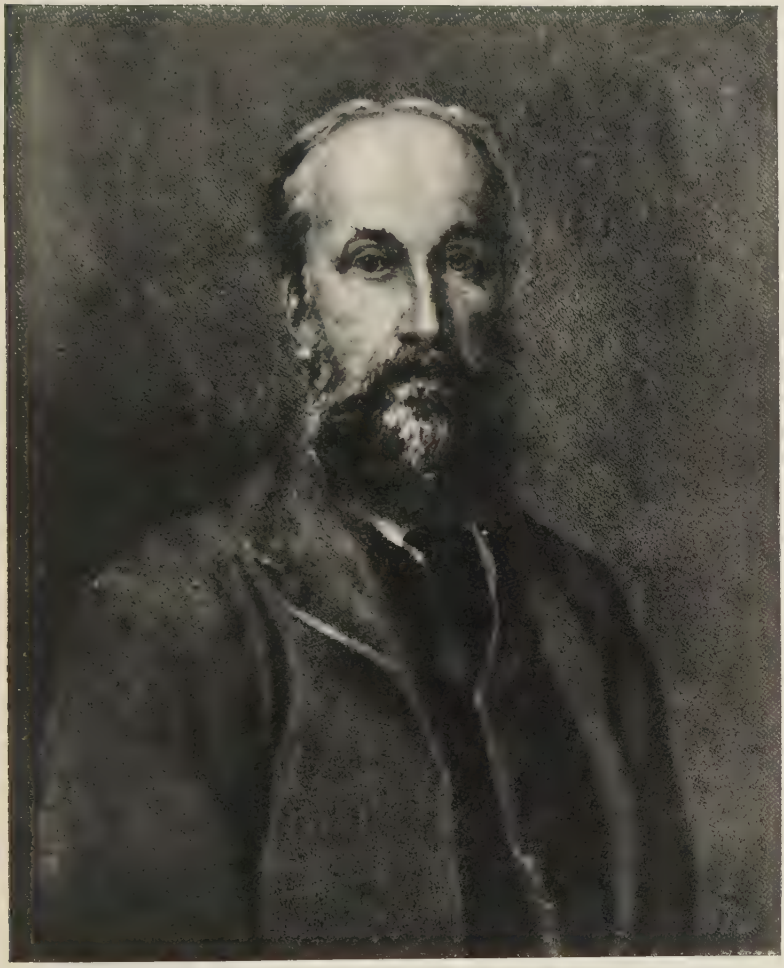
with Government has been destroyed; the property consisting almost entirely of new works in sheets; neither has the larger establishment of Messrs. Spottiswoode at all suffered. The property and premises are stated to be amply insured.

The following account has been sent us by a correspondent who has the means of being well-informed: 'Among the destroyed, either wholly or in part, are various publications in course of issue by Mr. Murray, by Messrs. Longman & Co., by Mr. Bentley, and other well-known publishers. It is scarcely possible from the multifarious character of the stores, and the confusion that still unavoidably prevails, to obtain anything like an exact list of the particular works which have been sacrificed; but among others it is known there were in the wareroom many hundreds of printed reams of Byron's works . . . a large issue of spelling books and other school books, preparing for Messrs. Longman & Co.; various novels and other works for Mr. Bentley; an octavo edition of Shakespeare; portions of the Statutes at Large; heaps of law-books in sheets; the greater part of the forthcoming volume of Lardner's Cyclopædia, etc. For several years no fire has occurred which has caused so extensive an inconvenience to the book trade, and such great disappointment to those readers who are anxiously awaiting for announced publications. Mr. Murray, the bookseller, was on the spot within an hour after the outbreak of the fire; and Mr. Rees, of the firm of Longman & Co., came there about noon. Mr. Spottiswoode is out of town, but an express has been sent to inform him of the disastrous event, and his arrival is expected. . . . The amount of damage is believed to be seriously great—as much as £20,000 has been named; but this probably is excessive.'

It is interesting to record in these days of disputes in the printing trade that Messrs.

Spottiswoode's houses were closed to the London Society of Compositors in 1836, when about 60 members of the Society left their employment. That history has at times an unpleasant way of repeating itself is shown by the fact that in the year 1911 the house of Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd. became closed to the various Societies, after 500 of the employés had thrown up their work.

A more agreeable topic to dwell on is the Wayzgoose (the traditional term for a printers' outing) of 1837, when the company was composed of Mr. Andrew Spottiswoode in the chair, of 33 visitors, 3 professional gents, 79 employés from the Queen's House, 50 from Shacklewell (the branch establishment of Eyre & Spottiswoode founded about 1812), and 147 from New-street Square, total 313. The bill came to £256 15*s.* or 16*s.* 4*d.* a head. It is stated that the 147 employés from New-street Square were out of a total of 239 employed, while the 79 from the Queen's House were out of a total of 144. The Wayzgoose continues to be held to this day, though Messrs. Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd. now of course hold theirs separately from Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd. In 1853 the Wayzgoose was held at the 'Toy' Hotel, Hampton Court, and we are told that the practice of giving 3*s.* to each man on the Establishment was this year discontinued and the dinner given at the expense of the firm. In 1854 the Dinner was held at the 'Old Ship' Hotel, Brighton, where



George Andrew Spottiswoode 1827-1899
*From a painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.*

with but few exceptions it has been held ever since. It may be of interest to give details of the Dinner of 1911 similar to those of 1837. In 1911 it was composed of Mr. Austen-Leigh in the chair, 3 other directors, 23 visitors, 2 artistes, and 367 from New-street Square, total, 396.

Like his predecessors Andrew Spottiswoode went into Parliament, being Member for Saltash from 1826 to 1830, and for Colchester from 1830 to 1831.

In 1848 or 1849 his younger son George Andrew Spottiswoode and Mr. T. C. Shaw became associated with him in the business. Mr. Shaw died in 1854, and in 1855 Andrew Spottiswoode retired altogether, leaving his son in charge. He had already resigned his share in the Queen's Patent to his elder son William, so that from this date forward the two houses of Eyre & Spottiswoode and Spottiswoode & Co., which had always been separate concerns, were no longer united by any personal link, although the most friendly relations have always subsisted between them.

But though their firms were separate the same desire to promote the welfare of their employés was evinced by both brothers, and shewed itself in various enterprises common to each business. One of their first steps was to form an early morning class of some of the warehouse boys; afterwards they took the reading-boys in hand, and subsequently offered educational facilities to the apprentices. At

that time the ordinary working hours of printers were practically unlimited throughout the trade and nominally extended from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., leaving time for neither recreation nor improvement. The two firms reduced the hours, making them run from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Further, they shortened the hours of work on Saturdays, first to 4 and then to 2 o'clock, and began the practice of paying wages on Friday afternoons instead of on Saturday mornings. Subsequently, a permanent morning school was formed for reading-boys and an evening school for the other youths. A schoolmaster was appointed, as well as a chaplain, and annual examinations were instituted. Mr. William Spottiswoode himself delivered lectures on scientific subjects. In 1853 a Choral Society and a library were established, and as time went on clubs were formed for rowing, cricket, football, etc. Meals and refreshments at remarkably moderate prices were supplied on the premises to all employés, and in various other ways the principals practically evinced their solicitude for the welfare of everyone in their service.

With George Spottiswoode were associated at first Mr. S. Baxendale and Mr. E. C. Wilson as partners, but the latter left in 1858 and the former in 1862. Mr. Cholmeley Austen-Leigh then joined George Spottiswoode—a partnership which continued until both died in the year 1899.

CHOLMELEY AUSTEN-LEIGH 1829-1899
*From a Photograph*

Of the various enterprises and expansions of the business in the last fifty years it is impossible to note more than a few. Thus in 1870 the firm became the printers of 'Lloyd's List,' at first renting premises for the purpose at the Royal Exchange. Two years later the printing works of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. at Green Arbour Court, Old Bailey, were taken over, with the result that the famous 'Cornhill Magazine' has ever since been printed by the firm. In 1878 the 'Shipping and Mercantile Gazette' was purchased from the executors of Sir William Mitchell, and the premises at which the paper was being printed at 54 Gracechurch Street were rented. A few years later the 'Shipping and Mercantile Gazette' and 'Lloyd's List' were amalgamated into one paper. In 1882 Mackintosh's business in Great New Street was acquired. In 1884 a lithographic plant was installed.

The chief event of the nineties was a serious fire that occurred on June 1, 1899, at 54 Gracechurch Street, but by dint of strenuous efforts the publication of the 'Shipping Gazette' was not suspended for even a day.

In 1900, owing to the death of the two senior partners in the previous year, the business was converted into a private Limited Company, since when the most important developments have been the purchase in 1901 of the printing and book-selling business of Mr. Ingalton Drake at Eton, and the opening of a country printing factory at Colchester in

the year 1908. About the same time, too, the Company, having acquired additional premises in the New-street Square block, were able to close 54 Gracechurch Street, and concentrate all their London works in one spot. The hands employed at the present moment number about 950 at New-street Square, 150 at Colchester, and 50 at Eton.

Though the firm originally occupied itself in printing little else than bookwork, by degrees it has taken up other branches of work, until at the present date its activities are largely centred in the news and jobbing sections. Thus as early as 1849 we find the firm beginning with 'Notes and Queries' the printing of periodicals which has come to form so large a part of their operations. The fifties brought the firm the 'Publishers' Circular'; the sixties the 'Architect,' the 'Saturday Review,' the 'Law Journal,' the 'Homeward' and 'Overland Mails'; the seventies the important trade papers the 'Chemist and Druggist' and the 'Ironmonger,' besides 'Public Opinion' and the 'Academy'; the eighties the 'Record'; the nineties the 'World,' the 'Statist,' the 'Outlook' and the 'Boy's Own Paper,' to name but a few; and though some of these papers are no longer printed by the Company, they have had many successors, so that at the present day some seventeen papers are produced every week at New-street Square. Of reviews Messrs. Spottiswoode & Co. either are or have been the printers of the 'Edinburgh,' the 'Church

Edward Chenevix Austen-Leigh
*From a pastel by E. R. Hughes*

Quarterly,' the 'Historical' and the 'Nineteenth Century'; while the magazines they have been responsible for include 'Fraser's,' 'Longman's,' 'Gentleman's,' 'Cornhill,' etc.

Commercial work was not seriously undertaken until the fifties, when one of the first important works set in hand was 'Sutton's Amateur's Guide,' which has been printed at New-street Square ever since 1857. Further, a large connexion has gradually been built up with the religious and learned societies, and this list includes the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Church Missionary Society, the Church Pastoral Aid Society, the Colonial and Continental Church Society, and the National Society; while the learned and other societies include the British Association, the Royal Horticultural, the Royal Historical, the Royal Astronomical, the Selden, the Navy Records, the Huguenot, etc., etc.

At the present day the business may fairly boast of the most up-to-date equipment. The gradual acquisition of the block of buildings in New-street Square has enabled the works to be arranged on the most convenient principles. The buildings themselves are protected against fire by the Sprinkler system as well as by the Pearson Fire Alarm. Inside, the machinery is driven by electricity, generated by a Diesel oil engine, with steam power as an alternative in case of breakdown. A plant of twenty-four Linotypes is ready to deal

with the numerous daily, weekly and monthly periodicals that the Company produce. A large staff of highly skilled compositors, reinforced by a dozen Monotypes, are prepared for almost any amount of jobbing work, from the largest high-class catalogues to the smallest leaflet. Moreover, in skill and accuracy the Readers of this House have long been acknowledged to be inferior to none.

The printing machines comprise almost every class—Annand rotary, Huber, Miehle and Wharfedale, while a score of platen machines deal with the smaller work. In the warehouse will be found all the latest types of folding and stitching machinery. In addition there is a complete electrotyping plant, and a fully equipped lithographic branch; finally, at Colchester a model factory has been laid down on the most recent and approved lines (including the principles of the Daylight Saving Bill), and is especially designed to do book and magazine work. For, notwithstanding the growth of the news and jobbing departments, bookwork is still an important item, and it is worthy of mention that the business which printed in the eighteenth century the histories of Hume, Gibbon and Robertson, and in the nineteenth the works of Macaulay, Froude, Gardiner and Lecky, is to-day printing the histories of Sir George Trevelyan and his son.

# EPITAPH:

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EPITAPH FOUND IN AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LEDGER AT NEW-STREET SQUARE

## A few Extracts from the Ledgers of William Strahan.

| | | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1739. | Mr. Thomas Longman | | | |
| July 14. | To printing the last 14 sheets of Chambers's Dictionary No. 1000 at £1 8 0 a sheet | 19 | 12 | 0 |
| 1741. | Mr. George Whitefield | | | |
| July 5. | To printing your letter to Mr. Wesley in 12 mo 3 half-sheets 1000 copies at £1 7 0 p. sheet | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| | for stitching do. | | 15 | 0 |
| | for a box for packing them up for Scotland | | 3 | 6 |
| 1744. | The Revnd. Mr. John and Charles Wesley | | | |
| July. | For printing Mr. John Wesley's Journal from Nov. 1739 to Dec. 1741 five sheets No. 1500 at £1 12 0 p. sheet | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 1748. | Mr. John Osborne | | | |
| Jan. | Roderick Random 30½ sheets No. 2000 at £1 16 0 | 54 | 18 | 0 |
| | Do. 2nd edition. 21 sheets No. 3000 at £2 6 0 a sheet | 48 | 6 | 0 |
| 1752. | Messrs. Tonson and Partners | | | |
| Aug. | Milton's Paradise Lost in 18mo No. 10,000 at £7 10 0 p. sheet 10 sheets | 75 | 0 | 0 |
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| 1753. | | | | |
| June. | ——— Paradise Regained 18mo No. 7500 10 sheets at £6 p. sheet | 60 | 0 | 0 |
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As the most uncommon care was taken in correcting the above Books, every sheet being carefully read by the Printer no less than ten times over, he hopes that if they really turn out to be the most correct editions hitherto published (not otherwise) the Proprietors will think him entitled to such a Reward for his Labour, as they would have given to a person employed on purpose.

| | | £ | s. | d. |
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| 1754. | Mr. Richardson | | | |
| March. | Grandison Vol. 5 11 sheets No. 2500 at £2 3 0 p. sheet. | 23 | 13 | 0 |
| 1754. | Partners in Rod. Random | | | |
| Aug. | Printing do. 26 sheets No. 1000 at £1 8 0 | 36 | 8 | 0 |
| | copy of do. to print by | | 4 | 0 |
| 1755. | Partners in Johnson's 8vo. Dict. | | | |
| Dec. | Printing do. 70 sheets No. 5000 at £4 5 0 | 297 | 10 | 0 |
| 1756. | Partners in the Rambler | | | |
| Jan. 7. | Printing do. 47½ sheets No. 1500 at £1 15 0 p. sheet | 83 | 2 | 6 |
| | corrections and alterations in do. | 1 | 17 | 0 |
| | copy to print by | | 10 | 0 |
| | one do. bound given Mr. Johnson | | 13 | 0 |
| | N.B. This Book was all printed off, except the last two sheets, 16 months ago | 86 | 2 | 6 |
| 1757. | Mr. James Rivington | | | |
| July. | The first 57 sheets of Smollett's History of England at £1 3 0 | 65 | 11 | 0 |
| 1758. | Partners in Per. Pickle | | | |
| Feb. | Printing Do. 50 sheets, No. 1000 at £1 6 0 | 65 | 0 | 0 |
| 1759. | Mr. Adam Anderson | | | |
| Jan. | Summons for Society for Propagating the Gospel No. 2000 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| | Dodsley, Johnson, Strahan | | | |
| April. | Prince of Abyssinia 2 vols. 21½ sheets No. 1500 at £1 4 0 | 25 | 16 | 0 |
| | Extra Cor. in do. | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| June. | Do. 2nd Edit. No. 1000 at 19*s.* | 20 | 8 | 6 |
| | | 48 | 9 | 0 |
| 1759. | Mr. Franklin | | | |
| March. | Enquiry concerning the Indians 11¾ sheets No. 1000 at £1 3 0 | 13 | 16 | 0 |
| | Paid for binding 600 Reviews at £3 12 0 p. 100 | 21 | 12 | 0 |
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| 1760. | Mr. Thomas Beckett. | | | |
| May. | Chippendale's Cabinet-Maker's Director | | | |
| | 6 sheets No. 750 at 19*s.* | | 5 14 | 0 |
| | Do. French 7 sheets No. 250 at 15*s.* | | 5 5 | 0 |
| 1761. | Rev. Mr. Sterne | | | |
| Dec. | Tristram Shandy Vols. 5 and 6 20 sheets | | | |
| | No. 4000 at £2 10 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| | Drink-money to the Men by order | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | Do. | 51 | 1 | 0 |
| 1765. | Tristram Shandy Vols. 7 and 8 | | | |
| Feb. | 20 sheets No. 4000 at £2 10 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| 1766. | Partners in Vicar of Wakefield | | | |
| May. | Printing 2nd edition of do. 19 sheets No. | | | |
| | 1000 at £1 1 0 | 19 | 19 | 0 |
| | Printing 3rd edition of do. No. 1000 | 19 | 19 | 0 |
| | Dr. Franklin | | | |
| Jan. | Considerations on taxing America 5½ | | | |
| | sheets No. 500 at 18*s.* | 4 | 19 | 0 |
| 1766. | Beckett and Strahan | | | |
| Nov. | Controversy between Hume and Rousseau | | | |
| | 6½ sheets No. 750 at 17*s.* | 5 | 10 | 6 |
| | Extra corrections in do. | | 9 | 6 |
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| 1767. | Rev. Mr. Sterne | | | |
| Jan. | Tristram Shandy Vol. 9 9¾ sheets No. | | | |
| | 3500 at £2 5 0 | 22 | 10 | 0 |
| | For a wooden cut to do. | | 5 | 0 |
| | | 22 | 15 | 0 |

PARTNERSHIP SUCCESSIONS.

1739 William Strahan.
1785–1818 Andrew Strahan.
1804–1815 William Preston.
1819–1855 Andrew Spottiswoode.
1819–1832 Robert Spottiswoode.
1848–1899 George Andrew Spottiswoode.
1848–1853 Thomas Clark Shaw.
1855–1862 Salisbury Baxendale.
1855–1858 Eliezer Chater Wilson.
1862–1899 Cholmeley Austen-Leigh.
1894–1900 Edward Chenevix Austen-Leigh.
1894–1900 Adrian George Spottiswoode.

1900 The business was formed into a Limited Company, the first Directors being

Edward Chenevix Austen-Leigh, *Chairman.*
Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh.
John Spottiswoode.
Charles Chenevix-Trench.
Robert Stansfield Herries, *Secretary.*

SOME IMPRINTS OF THE BUSINESS.

1739–1785 London:
Printed by W. Strahan

1785–1804
Printed by A. Strahan
Printer's-street

1804–1815 Strahan & Preston
New-street Square, London
*or*
Strahan & Preston
Printer's-street, London

1816–1818
Printed by A. Strahan
New-street Square, London
*or*
Printed by A. Strahan
Printer's-street, London

1819–1832 London:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode
New-street Square

1833–1848 London:
Printed by A. Spottiswoode
New-street Square

1848–1853 London:
Spottiswoodes & Shaw
New-street Square

1854–1855 London :
A. & G. A. Spottiswoode
New-street Square

1856–1867 London :
Printed by Spottiswoode & Co.
New-street Square

1868–1885 London : Printed by
Spottiswoode & Co., New-street Square
And Parliament-street

1885–1900 Printed by
Spottiswoode & Co., New-street Square
London

1900–1908 Printed by
Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd., New-street Square
London

1908 Printed by
Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd., London
Colchester and Eton

### Dates at which the Various Premises were First Occupied.

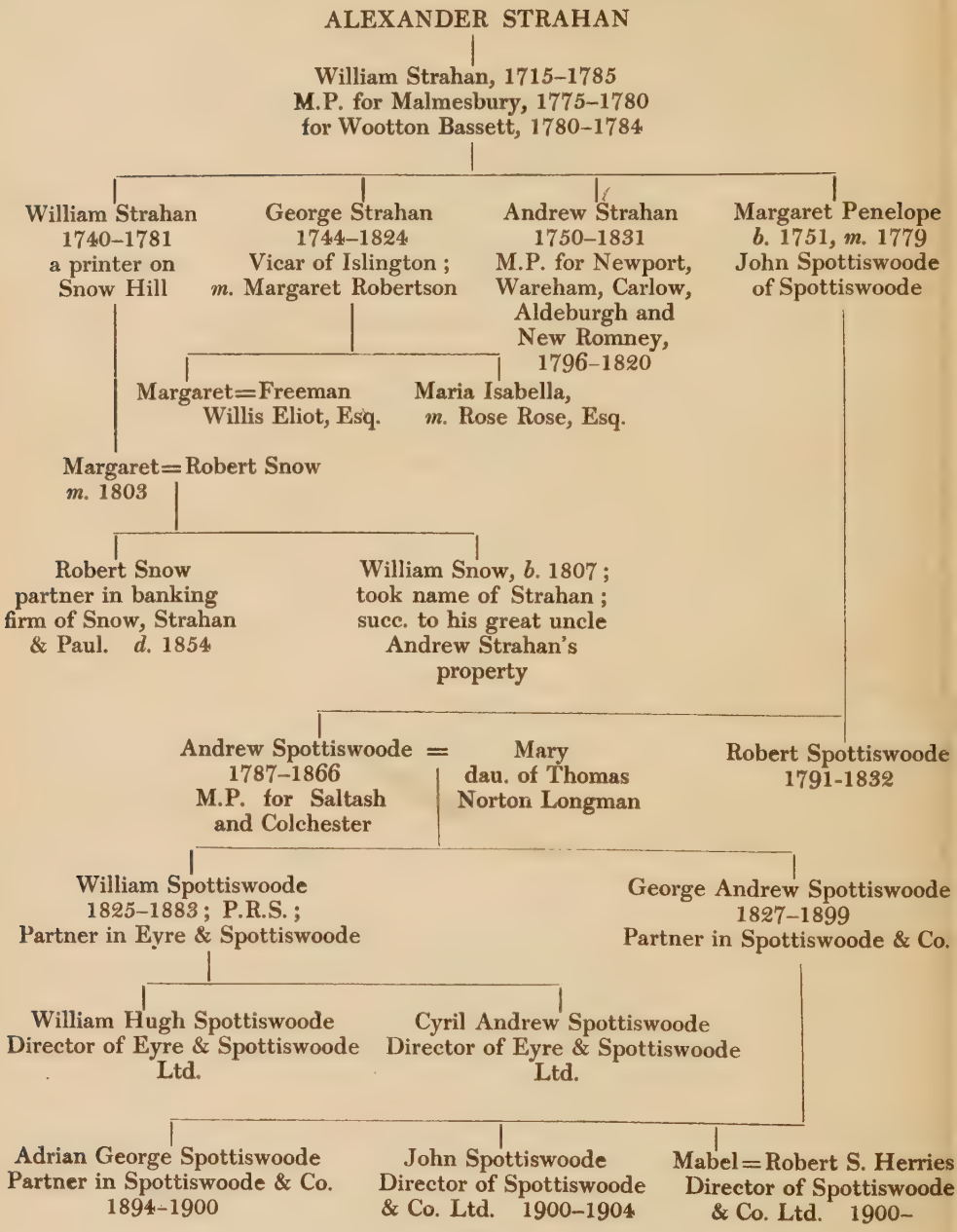
The premises now consist of the block of buildings formed by Nos. 75–82 Shoe Lane, 2–8 Little New Street, and 1–7 New-street Square, together with the island block Nos. 21–23 New-street Square, a warehouse under Nos. 12 to 14 New-street Square, No. 10 Richards' Buildings and another house in Richards' Buildings, known as ' Londonderry.'

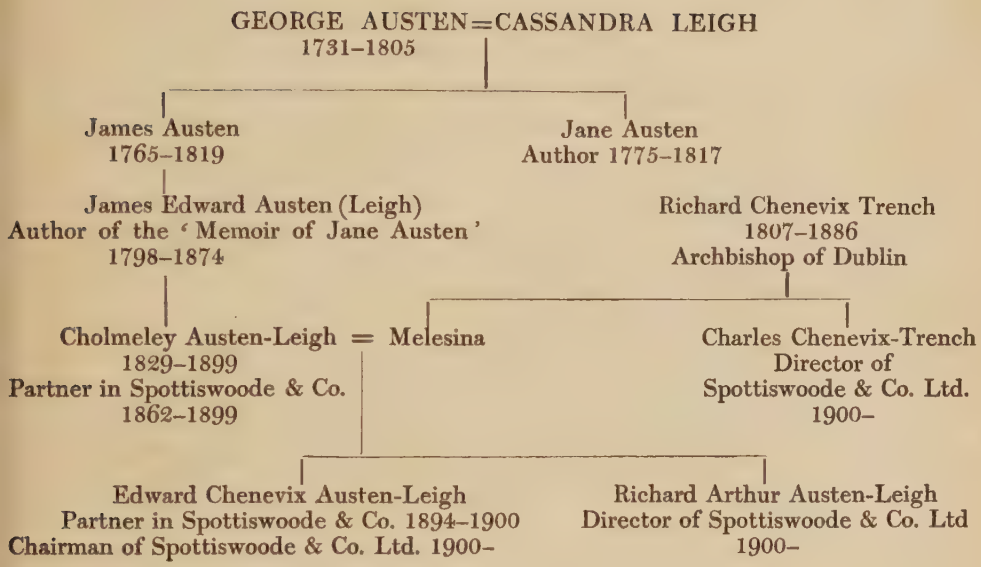
1800. 6 and 7 New-street Square rented.
1819. The 'Cooperage' rented (a building behind Nos. 6 and 7).
1820. 5 New-street Square.
1823. The Falcon Court property.
1828. The Warehouse.
1836. 'Londonderry' in Richards' Buildings.
1837. 4 New-street Square.
1842. 3 New-street Square.
1861. 2–6 Little New Street.
1882. 7 Little New Street.
1883. 77–82 Shoe Lane.
1884. 21–23 New-street Square.
1900. 12–14 New-street Square.
1903. 75–76 Shoe Lane.
1904. 1 and 2 New-street Square, 8 Little New Street.
1907. 10 Richards' Buildings.

Other premises at various times occupied by the firm:

1748–1860. 10 Little New Street.
1753–1837. Printer Street.
1838–1904. 8 New-street Square.
1867–1897. 30 Parliament Street.
1870–1881. 38 Royal Exchange (ground and first floor).

| | |
|---|---|
| 1870–1876. | 33 Royal Exchange (ground floor). |
| 1872–1886. | 87 Chancery Lane. |
| 1876–1881. | 37 Royal Exchange. |
| 1879–1907. | 54 Gracechurch Street and 1 Talbot Court. |
| 1886–1908. | 55 Gracechurch Street (ground floor and basement). |
| 1887–1901. | 4 Pemberton Row. |
| 1875–1906. | 10 New-street Square. |
| 1877–1906. | 11 New-street Square. |


ALEXANDER STRAHAN
William Strahan, 1715–1785
M.P. for Malmesbury, 1775–1780
for Wootton Bassett, 1780–1784
William Strahan
1740–1781
a printer on
Snow Hill
George Strahan
1744–1824
Vicar of Islington ;
m. Margaret Robertson
Andrew Strahan
1750–1831
M.P. for Newport,
Wareham, Carlow,
Aldeburgh and
New Romney,
1796–1820
Margaret Penelope
b. 1751, m. 1779
John Spottiswoode
of Spottiswoode
Margaret=Freeman
Willis Eliot, Esq.
Maria Isabella,
m. Rose Rose, Esq.
Margaret=Robert Snow
m. 1803
Robert Snow
partner in banking
firm of Snow, Strahan
& Paul. d. 1854
William Snow, b. 1807 ;
took name of Strahan ;
succ. to his great uncle
Andrew Strahan's
property
Andrew Spottiswoode =
1787–1866
M.P. for Saltash
and Colchester
Mary
dau. of Thomas
Norton Longman
Robert Spottiswoode
1791-1832
William Spottiswoode
1825–1883 ; P.R.S. ;
Partner in Eyre & Spottiswoode
George Andrew Spottiswoode
1827–1899
Partner in Spottiswoode & Co.
William Hugh Spottiswoode
Director of Eyre & Spottiswoode
Ltd.
Cyril Andrew Spottiswoode
Director of Eyre & Spottiswoode
Ltd.
Adrian George Spottiswoode
Partner in Spottiswoode & Co.
1894–1900
John Spottiswoode
Director of Spottiswoode
& Co. Ltd. 1900–1904
Mabel=Robert S. Herries
Director of Spottiswoode
& Co. Ltd. 1900–


GEORGE AUSTEN=CASSANDRA LEIGH
1731–1805
James Austen
1765–1819
Jane Austen
Author 1775–1817
James Edward Austen (Leigh)
Author of the 'Memoir of Jane Austen'
1798–1874
Richard Chenevix Trench
1807–1886
Archbishop of Dublin
Cholmeley Austen-Leigh = Melesina
1829–1899
Partner in Spottiswoode & Co.
1862–1899
Charles Chenevix-Trench
Director of
Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd.
1900–
Edward Chenevix Austen-Leigh
Partner in Spottiswoode & Co. 1894–1900
Chairman of Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd. 1900–
Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh
Director of Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd
1900–

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